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CITY HALL, ROOM 315, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102 - 733-8004



KENNETH A. S. RICH MAYOR

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CONTACT:
Doug Eldridge, 733-6488

WILLIAM ASHBY, CIVIC LEADER, TO BE HONORED AT 85

William M. Ashby, a leader in Newark community activities for more than 60 years, will be honored at an 85th birthday party on Oct. 15.

The party will be held at Thomm's Restaurant, 80 Park Ave., Newark, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. It is being sponsored by the Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee, on which Mr. Ashby serves as secretary.

Donald Dust, chairman of the landmarks committee, said that "for many years Mr. Ashby has been a living landmark in the development of our city. Long before most of us were born -- and certainly long before it became fashionable -- Mr. Ashby was fighting for social justice and civic betterment."

Mr. Ashby was the first black social worker in New Jersey. In 1917 he helped organize the first Urban League office in Newark, and then he served as its director for 10 years. He later established Urban League offices in Springfield, Ill., and Elizabeth, N.J. Since his retirement from the Urban League in 1953 Mr. Ashby has served on the Newark Human Rights Commission and the staff of the Newark Senior Citizens Commission.

A native of Virginia and one of a dozen children, Mr. Ashby first came to Newark in 1911. He worked his way through Lincoln and Yale universities, and has degrees from both. He has served as secretary of the Newark NAACP and the New Jersey Advisory Committee of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission.

He and his wife, Mary, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary earlier this year. They live at 214 W. Market St. in Newark.